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AUTHOR Seiquist, Jack
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ABSTRACT

This practicum assisted staff in (1) identifying and prioritizing problems and needs in the areas of communication and decision-making; (2) determining objectives relevant to these needs; and (3) developing a plan of action for attaining top priority objectives. After an orientation meeting, each staff member was interviewed in private and asked to respond to the same set of questions. Afterwards, three staff meetings were held, and the nominal group process (NGP) was employed to identify and prioritize staff needs. The NGP resulted in three top-ranked needs: (1) utilizing a number of helpful communication attitudes; (2) using specific communication skills; and (3) revising the procedure for staff evaluation. These needs were transformed into staff objectives, and a plan of action was developed. Staff evaluation of interviews and meetings was positive. Principal recommendations included making use of intrastaff recognition as a means of positive reinforcement, resolving interpersonal problems directly and as soon as possible after they develop, changing over to current evaluation practices sucessfully used by managers in education and business, and holding follow-up meetings with the Director of the Career Center to discuss staff feedback and to assist in revising the evaluation procedure. (Author)

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# A STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROJECT:
# ENHANCING THE ATTAINMENT OF CAREER CENTER GOALS
# BY DETERMINING STAFF NEEDS AND OBJECTIVES

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Jack Seiquist, M.A.

West Valley College

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ABSTRACT

This practicum describes a counselor's staff development project at a community college Career Center. The staff wished to develop a more effective work atmosphere by identifying ways of resolving interpersonal conflicts which were interfering with job performance. Conflicts and problems in communication were occurring between peers and between supervisors and staff members. Staff members were experiencing job dissatisfaction, frustration, lack of positive reinforcement and support, and lowered morale.

The purpose of this practicum was to assist the staff to: (1) identify and prioritize problems and needs in the areas of communication and decision-making; (2) determine objectives relevant to these needs; and (3) develop a plan of action for attaining top priority objectives.

After an orientation meeting, each staff member was interviewed in private and asked to respond to the same set of questions. Afterwards, three staff meetings were held, and the nominal group process (NGP) was employed to identify and prioritize staff needs. The NGP resulted in three top-ranked needs: (1) utilizing a number of helpful communication attitudes; (2) using specific communication skills; and (3) revising the procedure for staff evaluation. These needs were transformed into staff objectives, and a plan of action was developed. Staff evaluation of the interviews and the series of meetings was positive and appreciative. (Instruments employed in the project and results of the NGP are appended.)

Principal recommendations included: (1) making use of intrastaff recognition as a means of positive reinforcement; (2) resolving interpersonal problems directly and as soon as possible after they develop; (3) changing over to current evaluation practices successfully used by managers in education and business; (4) holding follow-up meetings with the Director of the Career Center to discuss staff feedback and to assist in revising the evaluation procedure.

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INTRODUCTION

The career center at West Valley College is headed by a Director. The Director and the Placement Officer are the principal supervisors. The staff consists of thirteen classified personnel. In addition, five certificated counselors work part-time in the Career Center. Services offered include career education, counseling, and job placement.

In past years, on-going staff development has been a conscious concern of the Director. Most recently, on July 20, 21, and 22, 1977, the Career Center staff participated in a three-day, off-campus retreat. It was conducted by the college's development design specialist. The purpose of the retreat was to identify staff goals and objectives and to formulate plans of action. One of the goals that emerged was "to establish an effective work atmosphere." The objective related to this goal was "to identify ways and means for resolving interpersonal conflicts that interfere with job performance." Various staff members were experiencing job dissatisfaction, frustration, lack of support and positive reinforcement, and lowered morale. Conflicts and problems in communication were occurring between peers and also between supervisors and staff members. The staff recognized its problems and wished to take appropriate action. The resulting plan of action called for contacting "a facilitator/resource person to help perfect communication skills." The plan suggested a series of meetings with the facilitator. The ultimate goal, through enhanced communication, was to improve the educational and service functions of the staff. (Quotes taken from goal statement, Appendix A.)

A consultation with the development design specialist resulted in the following awarenesses. The retreat had established the fact that there existed some kind of a communication problem, but this needed to be clarified. What was required was to conduct a careful assessment of the needs

related to the communication and decision-making processes within the staff. It was important to specify these needs. It was also important to identify the problems (and their symptoms and possible causes) which co-existed with and were related to the problem of communication. There was possibly a need to streamline policies and/or procedures; e.g., in the areas of evaluation or grievances. A need might exist to open up channels of communication; to feel a greater sense of participation in decision-making; to modify management style; or to set up and implement a reward/recognition system for effective communication. Once these needs had been identified, then relevant objectives could be formulated.

The situation at the Career Center was conceptualized in terms of Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1970:35-46). From initial impressions (confirmed by later experience), it appeared that where staff people were feeling discontent was not on the level of physiological or safety needs but mainly on the level of the belongingness need. They wanted more harmony. They wanted more open communication and more effective teamwork. These wants needed to be respected and responded to appropriately.

From a managerial viewpoint, working to meet these wants was regarded as a worthwhile objective. As McGregor (1957:26) pointed out:

> Many studies have demonstrated that the tightly knit, cohesive work group may, under proper conditions, be far more effective than an equal number of separate individuals in achieving organizational goals.

In order to keep expectations realistic, however, it proved helpful to recall Frederick Herzberg's insight (Gautschi, 1975:78) that, if not met, people's maintenance needs (physiological, safety, and belongingness needs) can be potential dissatisfiers; and that, when met, they tend to eliminate dissatisfaction. Yet meeting these needs cannot be expected to significantly motivate a person toward more effective achievement of organizational goals. To achieve this, according to Gautschi, it

would be necessary to tap into the higher esteem and self-actualization needs and "...to make task performance a path to need satisfaction."

In other words, Herzberg's research-backed theory (1968:53) states that the only way to effectively motivate an employee is to give that person responsibility for performing work which is truly challenging and commensurate with the individual's capability. In this practicum, to use Herzberg's distinction (1968:56-57), the concern was not with "growth or motivator factors intrinsic to the job" (such as "achievement, recognition for achievement, the work itself, responsibility, and growth or advancement") but with "dissatisfaction-avoidance or hygiene factors" (such as school policy and procedures, "...supervision, interpersonal relationships, working conditions...").

The purpose of this practicum was to assist the staff in: (1) identifying and prioritizing their problems and needs in the area of governance (communications and decision-making related to their goals); (2) determining objectives relevant to these needs; and (3) developing a step-by-step (but flexible) plan of action for attaining higher priority objectives. The actual implementation and evaluation of this plan of action will not be a part of this practicum. However, steps (1), (2), and (3) above will be evaluated.

A clarification of the concept of governance is in order. As Richardson and Bender (1974:i) define it:

> Governance is the umbrella term used to encompass the web of communications and decision-making which transform a collectivity of individuals into an organization engaged in purposeful activity.

They point out that "it is useful to think of the activities and relationships which contribute to the process of governance as a system." Just as the whole college can be regarded as a system, so too the various units within the college can be seen as being integral systems and parts of the

whole. The Career Center staff is such a unit. This study addressed itself to the governance needs of this unit.

The method of investigation was as follows:

1. After two preliminary meetings with the director, an initial meeting with the staff was held for orientation purposes and information-gathering.

2. Each staff member and each counselor was personally interviewed in private. (A predetermined set of questions was utilized. See Appendix C.)

3. Upon completion of the interviews, three additional staff meetings were held. During the first two, the nominal group process was used to identify and prioritize needs and objectives and to begin formulating a plan of action. This plan was completed during the third meeting.

## BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

California Assemblyman John Vasconcellos provides a broad context for this paper. An outspoken critic and leader in educational reform, he makes two very emphatic statements about a subject of central concern to him: humanizing education. In the first statement, Vasconcellos (1974:11) dramatically points to what he sees as "...the single most vital issue confronting public education today: the humanization of education." In his second statement, Vasconcellos (1974:13) declares what, in his opinion, will cause this process to occur: "The single most vital factor in humanizing education is the humanness of educators."

Anyone wishing to humanize a school must "...attend to the process of humanizing each and all of the persons working there." "Each and all" clearly includes classified as well as certificated personnel. Both have direct contact with students and therefore have the most impact on their lives.

For Vasconcellos (1974:13), this humanizing process requires both

cognitive and affective learning, including "...experiential learning in self-awareness, self-expression, self-determination and self-esteem." Through this process individuals grow towards being persons who are "...free and responsible and honest and loving."

This practicum attempted in a modest way to further the humanizing process Vasconcellos speaks of by taking the first necessary steps towards improving staff communication skills -- their specifically human skills of listening, talking, and interacting with each other. These steps involved determining staff needs and objectives related to their goal of an improved work atmosphere.

The planned follow-up to this practicum project, actually implementing the staff objective of having a Communication Workshop, will hopefully enhance staff members' knowledge and effectiveness as well as their sensitivity and humanness in their interpersonal exchanges among themselves and with students. This is the goal that the staff wants ultimately to achieve. Similarly, implementing the second staff objective will hopefully develop an evaluation procedure which is both more effective and more humanly satisfying.

William Plaster, Superintendent of the Upland School District in California, agrees with Vasconcellos that the humanization of education is critical. Plaster (1976:24) says: "We frequently find educational leaders expressing the viewpoint that if schools are to make meaningful changes, the people within the schools must change." He states that since 1973 the certificated and classified personnel of his district have participated in a three-week professional development program. Its goal is to enable participants to develop their "humanistic competencies/qualities" in five areas: content, instructional techniques, classroom management, instructional materials, and human relations. (It should be noted that this latter

competency corresponds quite closely to the long-range purpose of the present practicum.)

K. Patricia Cross (1976:69) cites Hilgard's "three especially human functions" of the teacher. The third is very similar to the facilitator's role in this practicum in his relationship to staff members: "...helping the student toward effective participation with others."

Cross (1976:69) goes on to speak of teachers involved in individualized instruction:

> If teachers are to provide the "uniquely human" touch to learning, we will need to redouble our efforts in educational research and staff development to help teachers work effectively with individual students.

What Cross says of teachers has equal validity for classified personnel in their daily contacts with students. They too need to provide the human touch. They too need the various kinds of learning experiences which come under the heading of staff development.

Before proceeding further, it seems appropriate to clarify the concept and importance of staff development. A central aspect of staff development has already been cited (Plaster, 1976:24): improving "humanistic competencies/qualities."

Frank Christiansen (1975:i) notes that:

> Staff development is an emerging concept in community colleges and is receiving a great deal of emphasis. Since the community college represents the fastest growing educational enterprise and since the staff is their major resource, this focus is understandable.

Christiansen (1975:iii) goes on to state that "staff development is recognized as an important factor in assisting community colleges to achieve their goals and fulfill their mission." He asserts that almost every community college involves itself in staff development but that their committment to this process ranges "...from a few activities to sophisticated models of organizational development."

Terry O'Banion (1976:26) seems to be in substantial agreement with

Christiansen's view that staff development is a very widespread phenomenon. O'Banion furthers an understanding of staff development by pointing out that few community colleges have formal programs "...in the sense of an organized, purposeful, supported attempt to provide for the professional and personal growth of all staff."

Chester Case (1975:Section III:2) offers a similar definition. He believes that program and staff development are "naturally conjoined." He defines such development as follows:

> Program and Staff Development is a comprehensive network of interrelated activities conducive to the professional and personal growth of the personnel of the college, toward the ultimate goal of improving learning opportunities.

"Why program and staff development?" he asks. "It makes the college a better place for learners and teachers (as well as administrators and classified staff)." It is worth noting that both Case and O'Banion use the phrase "professional and personal growth" and link together with conscious intent the two concepts of professional growth and personal growth. Case, in fact, sees not only professional and personal growth but also program and staff development as closely intertwined realities, so much so that they are "...indistinguishable except as just different facets of the same process." Each of these interrelated activities makes its contribution to the ultimate goal of improved learning.

A second definition relevant to the purposes of this practicum was offered by Dr. Alfredo de los Santos during his opening presentation (9/24/77) for the College Governance module to the Oakland cluster of Nova University: "Good management is the art and science of achieving personal and organizational objectives with the least possible expenditure of resources." This definition is pertinent because this practicum was concerned with contributing toward good management (at the invitation of management and staff) through performing the prior function of actually

identifying personal and staff objectives.

How can staff development be effected? Terry O'Banion (1974:32) suggests one way by specifically encouraging counselors to expand their traditional role-conception to include staff development work: "As part of the emerging model of student development, many counselors are beginning to examine roles as facilitators of staff development." He points out that "a number of community colleges already offer encounter groups, human relations laboratories, and human potential seminars for staff members." These groups are offered by counselors. Their purpose is to heighten the sensitivity and interpersonal effectiveness of staff people in their relationships with students. (The present practicum is an example of a staff development project conducted by a counselor.)

O'Banion brings the issue of staff development into sharp focus for the community college. O'Banion (1976:26) asserts that staff development is "...a new priority for the seventies." After the rapid growth and expansion of the last decade and a half, community colleges must now focus on the quality of education and services offered to students. He holds that this "...depends primarily on the quality of the staff." "The priority of the future," says O'Banion, "is a priority on persons, on the needs of the people who staff the people's college."

O'Banion (1976:26) cites support for his position from the 1973 Second National American Association of Community and Junior Colleges Assembly on Staff Development:

> This assembly urges in the most vigorous terms that community and junior colleges accept staff development as a first-rank priority and give it the same total institutional committment that is accorded to its other programs and curriculum.

To provide a basic rationale for staff development in a given community college, O'Banion (1976:28-29) lists several needs which must be met. Among them is the need for a "sense of community in the college."

Bill Coulson (1973:ix) supports O'Banion's viewpoint. In his preface, Coulson says, "This book is about the sense of community so often neglected in the life of our institutions." According to O'Banion (1976:29), there is a growing number of community colleges which see staff development as the key to the task of developing this communal feeling. These colleges believe that they function best when their staffs work cooperatively and when they share "...a common sense of identity and mission."

There are roadblocks, however. Where people are working together, human realities must be recognized. Conflict inevitably occurs. In such situations, as Richardson, Blocker, and Bender (1972:57) note, it can happen that "...the energy of those involved seems to be expended more in internal conflict than on the objectives for which the organization exists." Fortunately, this is not the case with the Career Center staff. But a need does exist; help has been sought; and means are available for improving communication.

O'Banion (1976:31-32) lists several emerging approaches to staff development. He mentions an off-campus retreat (such as the one recently made by the Career Center staff). The "Interpersonal Relationship Approach" focuses in on various groups within the college. The intent is to improve communication within these groups. Improved relationships, in turn, are "...posited as the key to efficient and effective functioning of decision-making processes." He continues:

> The goal is to create a system in which openness and honesty and directness can prevail in the communication style of participants -- rather than manipulation, counterstrategy, and hidden agenda.

This goal is strikingly similar to that selected by the Career Center staff during their summer retreat as the purpose of the proposed monthly meetings (see Appendix A, item 3b): "to promote teamwork and a philosophy of open, honest, caring and respectful communication."

Inasmuch as staff evaluation can be viewed as a significant component of staff development, it is appropriate at this point to discuss this issue and to give brief citations of relevant literature.

West Valley College Board Policy recognizes "...that continuous evaluation...is essential." It further states that:

> The foundation of all evaluation must be the individual staff member's stated philosophy, objectives and procedures to the extent that they are congruent to the needs and goals of the college and the community. (West Valley College Faculty Handbook, page 33)

The policy calls for "a cooperative evaluation" between administrator and staff member, whose self-evaluation is to serve as the basis of the evaluation procedure.

Evaluation of staff personnel is a critical governance process. It simultaneously has the potential for improving the effectiveness of services and the potential for conflict generation. Management personnel need to be concerned with maximizing the former and minizing the latter. Avoiding conflict is rendered expecially difficult where the adversary situation is brought about by collective bargaining, the option recently chosen by the classified employees at West Valley College.

Conducting evaluations can best be done according to well established principles. Morin (ED 024 361) is cited by Boyer (1970:1) as offering broad principles which should be followed in any evaluation procedure. While they were written with the evaluation of teachers in mind, they apply equally well to the evaluation of classified personnel. (Appropriate substitutions appear in parentheses.) The principles state that:

1. evaluation is a complex and vital process and must not be treated casually...,
2. the evaluator must employ "scientific" procedures in an effort to collect objective data,
3. evaluation of (personnel) should focus primarily on definable segments of observable behavior...

4. (inapplicable)

5. both (evaluatee) and evaluator must be cognizant of, and accept as legitimate, the stated objectives of (services), and

6. the evaluative procedure must be inherent in the total scheme for (development of services) in the college.

Carol Zion and Suzanne Richter report on a model successfully operating at Miami-Dade Community College. The model is essentially very simple. As Zion and Richter (1973:22) note, "Basically, the process has two parts: (1) stating the major strengths of the person being evaluated, and (2) establishing professional goals."

As a further resource, the ideas of Harry Levinson (1976:30) deserve to be acted upon, especially his concept of a "performance appraisal system that accounts for the 'how' as well as the 'what'...." Such a system establishes:

> ...job descriptions that are behavior- as well as results-oriented; a critical incident program in which managers write reports regularly on the behavior of their employees; and support mechanisms to help managers honestly appraise the behavior of their employees as well as of their bosses.

The present staff development project needs to be seen in a larger context. In February, 1977, the President of West Valley College directed that a task force develop a new statement of the college's philosophy, goals, and objectives. Broad input was sought from all segments of the college. A few quotes from the completed document will illustrate the significance assigned to staff development (explicitly or implicitly) at the college:

(From the Philosophy)

We believe that human beings have the capacity to learn and to grow throughout their lives.

(From the Goals)

The highest standards of quality education in order to promote creativity, excellence, and lifelong learning for both students and staff.

Growth as persons, including greater self-knowledge, deeper

acceptance of self, and heightened self-esteem.

Opportunities for high levels of achievement for students and staff.

A trusting, supportive, and harmonious environment for persons to grow towards maximum well-being and full human functioning.

(From the Objectives)

Write and implement a plan for coordinating and improving development at WVC (i.e., staff development, instructional development, institutional development and research and program planning).

The above statements reflect the clearly positive and supportive attitude at the college towards staff development.

Summary

This practicum was placed in the broad context of a vital educational issue: the humanizing of education. Central to achieving this goal is the process of improving the human relations skills of school personnel. This improvement of interpersonal attitudes and skills, which are so critical to the governance processes of communication and decision-making, can be effected by means of staff development.

Several authors stress the growing importance of staff development. The American Association of Community and Junior Colleges urges that it be given "first-rank priority." In their governance functions, administrators have a special responsibility to allocate funds for staff development.

Promoting both the personal and professional growth of staff members is integral to the concept and practice of staff development. Its ultimate goal is to improve learning and student services: the purpose of the college.

The present practicum was a project in staff development. Its specific purpose was to determine the needs and objectives of the Career Center staff, to prioritize these needs and objectives, and to develop a plan of action. The desired goal was to enhance communication and inter-

personal effectiveness. Since evaluation is an issue related to staff development, relevant literature was cited, including mention of currently successful evaluative practices.

The present project was shown to be consistent with West Valley College's new statement of philosophy, goals, and objectives.

PROCEDURES

In order to fulfill the purposes of this practicum, the following steps were taken. After two preliminary meetings with the Director of the Career Center, an initial group meeting was held to get acquainted with staff members, to conduct some self-awareness exercises, and to determine personal and group objectives in broad outline. Determining these objectives was effected by an informal survey (Appendix B), to which staff members responded anonymously and in writing. This survey consisted of a set of general questions developed from considerable experience with such groups. The questions were designed to get people thinking about what they wanted to gain as individuals and as a group or team. The information thus acquired gave the facilitator some insight into the attitudes, feelings, desires, perceptions, and needs of staff members.

This information also proved helpful in developing a questionnaire, which was used as the basis for personal interviews with both staff members and counselors. This questionnaire (Appendix C) was developed in collaboration with several staff members. The questions were designed to determine what problem(s) the person perceived (related to the goal of creating a more effective work atmosphere); what the person needed to help resolve the problem; what the staff needed to resolve the problem; and how this could be done. The final question asked for any further comments.

The intent of the personal interviews was to:

1. establish and/or develop a positive relationship between the

facilitator/counselor and individual staff members;

2. assist individuals to identify and clarify personal and staff needs;

3. encourage individuals to accept some personal responsibility for doing something constructive about identified problems;

4. emotionally and psychologically prepare staff members for the nominal groups process, which followed the interviews; and

5. be an occasion for giving preliminary and personalized instruction in communication attitudes and skills appropriate to individual need.

These interviews were conducted between the first orientation meeting and the second group meeting (a period of four weeks).

The second meeting was devoted to a formalized needs assessment utilizing the procedure known as the "nominal group process" (as taught by Dr. Max Raines of Nova and Michigan State Universities during the Societal Factors module in the fall of 1976). This process involves the whole group. It has two basic steps: non-judgemental idea generation and prioritizing of needs. Because this process is totally accepting of all ideas presented, no ideas are rejected, regardless of merit. Lowest priority items, however, can be politely disregarded and never, in fact, acted upon.

Thus, two sources of input were tapped: individuals in personal interviews and the staff functioning as a group. Information from these sources was then utilized to formulate objectives and a plan of action. Completing this last step required a third group meeting. Each of the three meetings took two hours, although the last meeting was not entirely devoted to objectives and plan of action.

The entire project was evaluated by a simple form (Appendix D), which was drawn up in consultation with staff members. The questions were designed to determine what the individuals's overall response was to the project; whether the person came to know and feel more comfortable with

the facilitator (important for building trust and confidence); whether the process helped clarify personal and staff objectives; and any other comments.

Limitations

The five counselors who work part-time at the Career Center participated in the process of personal interviews. Their input proved helpful in heightening awareness of current problems. Perhaps the only noteworthy limitation of this study arose from the absence of these counselors from the subsequent group meetings. (One counselor attended the initial orientation group meeting, prior to the interviews. Apart from this one time. no other counselor participated at any other group meeting, even though they were invited and encouraged to attend. In their defense it should be said that they would have attended on their own time.) As a consequence, there was no direct improvement of teamwork and communication between certificated counselors and classified staff.

It should be noted, however, that this happening created the advantage of having the classified people come together by themselves, identify and prioritize their needs, and develop their own objectives (and team spirit as well). They were thus able to focus in on themselves and concentrate on their own communication and decision-making needs. Moreover, from a group process point of view, the size of the group (thirteen) was much more manageable than if there had been eighteen participants.

One other limitation of the methodology seems worth mentioning. The individual interviews were quite time-consuming (ranging from thirty-five to forty-five minutes apiece). Inasmuch as there were eighteen interviewees, that represents a considerable amount of time. From a cost perspective, this approach would have been somewhat expensive, if it had

not been a volunteer effort on the part of the counselor. Staff members were interviewed on company time. Nevertheless, the benefits of the interviews seemed to outweigh any disadvantages.

Assumptions

In an article entitled, "The People And Processes In The School: Key To A Humanistic Curriculum," Tye, Golub, and Wall (1976:6) express their serious concern:

> ...that the current efficiency movement in California and throughout the nation which calls for accountability, management by objectives, use of PPBS or instructional systems, is basically dehumanizing in that it is based on the following set of assumptions....

They then list some decidedly negative assumptions about people and insist that "creation of a humanistic atmosphere and curriculum in a school calls for a very different set of assumptions." The basic assumptions they used in their project beautifully sum up the assumptions underlying the present study and affirm a positive, trusting, and humanizing attitude towards people:

> People in the schools are capable of goodness and rationality, individually they can be self-actualizing and collectively they can solve problems.
>
> With freedom of choice, time to learn and to interact, and a supportive climate, people will seek better ways to live and work.
>
> As people seek and find better ways to live and work, they become individually more self-actualizing and collectively more capable of solving problems.

Another important assumption of this study parallels an assumption utilized by Tye, Golub, and Wall (1976:6) in their five-year project, namely that the administrator "...could and should be the single most critical person in the change process...." The administrator was seen as "...a leader, one who facilitates the activities of others through communication, modeling, encouraging, supporting, attaining resources, and the like." Thus in this practicum it was assumed that the Director of the Career Center would be the key person. His attitudes were seen as critical to the success of the project.

RESULTS

This section of the study will report on the results of the three procedures utilized in this project: (1) the informal survey conducted at the staff orientation meeting; (2) the personal interviews with staff members; (3) the nominal group process. Information from the final evaluation will also be recorded.

Results from the first two procedures will be presented in the form of an overview. Data was secured with the express understanding that anonymity would be preserved and confidentiality respected. The general purpose of these procedures was to generate awareness of patterns of staff rather than personal needs and problems. This was not to minimize the importance of personal concerns but to emphasize that the overall thrust of the procedures was towards the identification of needs on a staff level.

Staff responses to the informal survey questionnaire (Appendix B) repeatedly referred to a general need for more open, honest, empathic, and caring communication and a need for improvement in skills. Many specific skills were frequently mentioned: greater self-awareness; more effective listening; conflict resolution; expressing anger (and other feelings) in a positive manner and without feeling fearful or guilty; accepting criticism comfortably; assertiveness; feedback on communication effectiveness and other behaviors; group communication skills; mustering courage.

Some individuals expressed unique concerns: the cliquishness of the group; a need for greater knowledge of duties (own and others'); a need for a more positive attitude on the staff (the complaint was that accomplishments tended to be minimized and failures were accentuated).

There appeared to be strong group sentiment towards achieving greater mutual understanding, acceptance, and tolerance with the goal of increased cohesiveness, unity, friendship, and harmony.

Personal interviews were conducted with each staff member and the

five counselors in an informal and private setting. A prearranged format (Appendix C) was followed. The interview was opened with a reference to the staff goal of establishing a more effective work atmosphere and the objective of identifying ways and means for resolving interpersonal conflicts which interfere with job performance. Although there were actually four questions on the questionnaire, the interviewer attempted to get answers to two basic questions: What's the problem? What can be done about it?

Responses varied considerably according to the individual and his or her work situation. A basic attempt was made to develop rapport with the interviewee as a person. Analysis of notes written during the interviews revealed the following central concerns.

Communication was clearly the predominant concern. It seemed not a matter of whether the person was aware of problems in communication but how many problems the person was aware of. This concern included such general needs as communication which was two-way; open, direct, assertive, and confronting; self-initiated; caring; job-related. Also included was a range of specific skills such as problem-solving at the level where the problem occurs; giving and receiving feedback (facts and feelings); taking care of unfinished business; asking to be heard.

A number of other needs were identified. Needs or problems mentioned by several (three or more) people were: privacy (the Career Center has an open space arrangement); change away from authoritarian attitudes; giving praise, credit, recognition for accomplishments; sense of group purpose; dealing with job dissatisfaction (seen in others); rewriting job descriptions with clearer statements of responsibilities and expectations; improved evaluation system.

When questioned, interviewees (with few exceptions) consistently expressed a prevailing feeling of moderate optimism regarding the outcome

of this project. As a group, they seemed to like the experience of having individual, personalized interviews. Several explicitly shared their positive feelings.

After the interviews were completed, the staff came together for the nominal group process (NGP). The purpose of this exercise was to identify and prioritize needs and determine objectives. Individuals sat in chairs arranged in an arc in front of a chalk board. This arrangement allowed free access to the board for those who wished to write something and full visibility of all items written on the board (an important aspect of the processes of brainstorming, clarifying and condensing, and ranking).

The following challenge question was presented to the group in order to begin the silent, written brainstorming phase of the NGP.

> What does the Career Center staff need in order to work towards attaining the goal of a more effective work atmosphere and the objective of resolving interpersonal conflicts?

This written question was supplemented by the questions,"What steps or measures does the staff need to take to do this? What must we do?" It was explained that the need could be a need to do, learn, accept, understand, agree, set up, or arrange. The need could be in the areas of attitudes, skills, procedures, systems. After a few clarifications, the group began to write.

After fifteen minutes of writing, the group was invited to share their ideas (one at a time per person, in round-robin fashion). Each contribution was summarized and written on the board. Ideas were accepted without comment until all had exhausted their input of ideas. These ideas were then clarified, condensed, and combined (to avoid duplication) in a discussion process which involved no value judgments about the worth of the idea presented. The individual needs thus obtained were then grouped into nine clusters of related ideas. This phase of the NGP consumed the two hours alloted for the meeting. It should be noted that during this

time (and in subsequent sessions) the Director of the Career Center was true to his promise to participate in this process as an equal rather than a superior. A truly democratic process took place. Each person expressed ideas and voiced opinions. Each had equal say.

The next week, the group picked up where it left off. After a review of the identified clusters of needs (written on the board), each individual began the process of setting priorities by privately ranking each need area from one to nine. This was followed by individual defense of top-ranked items and round-robin discussion of the relative importance of most items. It proved unnecessary to discuss each item, because the most important ones emerged rather rapidly and consensus developed in the group. This was also a very time consuming phase of the process. Once this general consensus had been reached, the final phase of the NGP began. Individuals privately re-ranked their clusters of needs and recorded their rankings on a master sheet. At this point time was up, and the meeting adjourned. The individual rankings were later tallied, and the results were distributed to each staff member. The final ranking of needs was as follows (number one was top priority):

1. Communication Attitudes

   Respect opinions
   Consider and accept each person's privacy and viewpoint
   Forgiveness
   Mutual trust
   Sense of humor
   Honesty
   Eliminate hyprocrisy
   Objectivity
   Agree not to gossip
   Treat all staff in a fair, warm, and professional manner
   Eliminate favoritism
   Take responsibility
   Promote personal growth, self-worth

2. Communication Skills

   Empathic listening
   Presenting information
   I messages
   Assertiveness

Expressing negative feelings
Accepting/implementing communication as a two-way process
Using sense of humor
Accepting negative feedback
Agree it's OK to give negative feedback to supervisors
Clarity and specificity of instructions
Uniform dissemination of instructions
Resolving problems immediately or as soon as possible

3. Management Functions/Procedures

   Promote personal growth and self-worth
   Develop a system for on-going evaluation
      coaching/recognizing achievement
      clarifying expectations
      constructive criticism
      self-awareness
   Clarifying/prioritizing job responsibilities

4. Leadership: direction/decisions
   Follow through to completion/getting results
   Organization, productivity

5. Integration/less segregation of services
   Cooperative projects/flexibility in use of job descriptions

6. Establish/refine procedures to distribute labor more effectively
   Establish procedures for routine duties (manual)

7. Department staff: weekly problem solving sessions

8. Less authoritative environment/attitude

9. Criticism workshop

The last step of the nominal group process, writing objectives and developing a plan of action, occured at a follow-up meeting. By group consensus the first three needs were strongly supported as having top priority and deserving of the staff's concentrated energies. The needs related to job responsibilities and procedures were responded to before the project was even completed. The Placement Officer took responsibility for completing a staff manual. Other needs were regarded as of lesser importance. As a consequence, objectives were formulated to meet only the first three needs. The first objective combined the first two needs:

> Objective 1: Conduct a Communication Workshop (a series of meetings beginning next week) to experience, learn, and practice appropriate communication attitudes and skills.

Objective 2: Revise the present evaluation procedure (incorporating current successful practices at other community colleges) and put this procedure into effect as soon as possible (within the next several weeks).

The Director proposed that a mini-evaluation procedure, which he designated "Check Point A," be initiated. This was to be followed a few months later by "Check Point B." The purpose would be to respond immediately to staff requests for on-going evaluation and to serve as an occasion of appraisal and feedback well before the annual evaluations conducted in June.

The formulation of the objectives and plan of action formally concluded this staff development project. The staff's responses to the Career Center Staff Evaluation form (Appendix D) were as follows. The first question asked, "Overall, how do you feel about the personal interview with Jack?" Respondents answers were:

0 very dissatisfied

0 somewhat dissatisfied

1 neutral/so-so

1 reasonably satisfied

8 very satisfied

The second question was, "Overall, how do you feel about the group meetings?" Responses were:

0 very dissatisfied

0 somewhat dissatisfied

2 neutral/so-so

5 reasonably satisfied

3 very satisfied

The third question inquired, "Have the interview and the group meetings resulted in your knowing Jack better and feeling more comfortable with him as a person?" Staff members replied:

Yes 10 No 0 Unsure 0

The fourth question asked, "Have the interview and the group meetings

helped you to clarify your personal objectives related to your work in the Career Center?" Answers were:

Yes 6 No 0 Unsure 4

The fifth question was, "In your opinion, has the process of interviews and group meetings resulted in clarifying staff objectives related to improving the work atmosphere?" Staff responses were:

Yes 6 No 0 Unsure 4

The sixth and final question asked for any comments. These follow:

We've somewhat succeeded in our objective setting. How to actually implement them into our work atmosphere, then how to evaluate the productivity of the process?

After looking over all the objectives I see that the staff feels there are some big problems that must be solved. Being in the position that I'm in being new, I am somewhat lost in the way of going about to get these problems solved. I know only a few very well and cannot relate much of these group sessions to the problem.

My overall feeling is good. I think we have established the basic groundwork for working toward our objectives.

Since this process was initiated it shows that people care, if they didn't care there would be no wanting to solve the problems, that in itself is POSITIVE AND GOOD!

You're great but the hostility in the group is too deep rooted to be resolved - at least in the near future.

I have heard many positive comments from other career center staff regarding their confidence in you, Jack. Sort of like meeting a new friend!

Jack: Your sessions have a very positive effect in a somewhat negative atmosphere. Your personality is dynamic and that rubs off on the C.C. staff. It's quoted, "You must like yourself before you can like others." You are living proof of this! Could some staff members feel miserable or insecure about themselves?

I feel so much more positive about these sessions and their potential for good result than I did at the onset when I felt defensive about the whole thing.

I want to comment on 1. I can see the importance of the information obtained, but felt uncomfortable in that I made personal judgments -- otherwise I enjoyed the personal interview.

I feel that the only possible way to clarify personal work objec-

tives is to discuss specifics with supervisors as to expectations, coaching and recognition of achievement.

## DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study resulted in the identification and prioritization of the needs of the Career Center staff (see Appendix E). Prior to this project, the staff was aware of having communication problems. The procedures employed during the project brought about a much more clear and detailed analysis and specification of the staff's communication needs in the two areas of skills and attitudes. These needs were ranked as having top priority.

One other major need emerged and gained strong staff acceptance: to develop a more effective and acceptable method of personnel evaluation. The staff wanted a system for on-going evaluation which included various elements: increasing self-awareness; clarifying expectations and prioritizing job responsibilities; constructive criticism; coaching; and recognition of achievement.

These two areas of greatest need, communication and evaluation, provided the basis for the formulation of two objectives: (1) conduct a Communication Workshop; (2) revise the present evaluation procedure. These objectives were regarded as so important that no other objectives were developed. The staff wanted to concentrate entirely on the two objectives.

It is worth pointing out that these two objectives are very compatible with the newly developed philosophy and goals of West Valley College. Both objectives contribute towards attaining the goals of "open, honest, and caring communication" and "a trusting, supportive, and harmonious environment for persons to grow towards maximum well-being and full human functioning." The second objective concerns revising the evalu-

ation procedure. The new emphasis on employee strengths and professional goals will hopefully contribute towards another college goal: to "...promote creativity, excellence, and lifelong learning for both students and staff." The belief that people have the capacity to learn throughout their lives is part of the new statement of college philosophy.

It is also interesting to note that the Career Center staff identified their need for many communication attitudes and skills which pertain to the affective dimension of relationships stressed as essential by Vasconcellos, Plaster, Cross, and O'Banion (cited earlier). This need serves to corroborate the importance of the underlying human need for a work environment characterized by effective communication and some measure of interpersonal unity and harmony.

It is significant that the need for revising the evaluation procedure did not begin to emerge until towards the mid-point of this project. The subject was not even raised by staff members in the earliest phase of information-gathering (the informal written survey). This fact gives an indication of the staff's human need for time to reflect on the work situation, time to talk and discuss among themselves and to identify, rank, and re-rank needs until some clarity and consensus was generated.

A further interpretation can be offered. The interview process had provided some evidence that at least some staff members were reluctant to bring up problems with supervisors. They didn't feel free to open up and discuss their concerns, especially problems they had in their relationships with their supervisors. Evaluation was apparently one such problem. Evaluation, moreover, was a particularly sensitive issue, and many people had strong feelings about it. These feelings did not surface until a sufficiently accepting, non-judgmental, and non-authoritarian interpersonal atmosphere was created. Both the Director and his next-in-line staff supervisor (the

Placement Officer) can take credit for their willingness in the group sessions (and afterwards) to listen and receive acceptantly the ideas and opinions of their subordinates. In addition, the supervisors participated in the nominal group process in a democratic manner, comporting themselves (in general) as equal members of a team. They refrained from asserting or exercising their authority.

The interview process provided further insight into the situation with the Director of the Career Center. According to the perceptions of some interviewees, the Director was inadvertently creating problems because of his managerial style. On the one hand, he wanted (and sincerely tried) to be personal with his staff. He wanted quality relationships and went out of his way to create and promote them. However some interviewees saw him as having "favorites" on the staff, and they resented it. On the other hand, the Director was seen as being keenly aware of his responsibilities as manager. He wanted a smooth-working team. He wanted his people to be very conscientious. He wanted to get results. In his managerial capacity he was sometimes perceived as authoritarian in style (and possibly not as democratic as he like to think of himself).

In McGregor's terms, it seems that the Director tended to act from a "Theory X" position more than he realized; whereas he tended to talk from "Theory Y." In other words, he tended to rely on "direction and control" (McGregor, 1957:27) more than on "self-control and self-direction" (McGregor, 1957:29). McGregor goes on to comment bluntly on these two distinct styles: "It is worth noting that this difference is the difference between treating people as children and treating them as mature adults."

It is to the Director's credit that he recognized some disparity between his personal ideal and the reality of his managerial style. He quickly effected appropriate changes. By staff reports he became much less

"authoritarian" in his way of relating to others. They said he was listening more effectively. They felt they were being heard more than in the past.

Another significant change was the Director's decision to introduce "Check Point A" and "Check Point B" (brief evaluation sessions) in response to the need which emerged for more on-going evaluation and individual coaching.

A related idea was quite innovative: to introduce the counselor/facilitator into the above evaluation process so that there would be three people present: Director, staff member, and facilitator. The latter's role would be to assist both parties to communicate clearly and effectively with each other. The feasibility of this idea is currently being explored.

To judge from the above report of the Director's decisions and actions, one of the assumptions made in this study appears to have been quite valid. That was the assumption made by Tye, Golub, and Wall (1976:6) that the administrator would be "...the single most critical person in the change process...." (It could also be noted that this practicum was only the most recent of a series of staff development projects initiated by the Director.)

During preliminary interviews at the beginning of the practicum, the Director stated that he saw his role in the group process as that of an "equal participant." He answered affirmatively to the question, "Are you open to receive and consider implementing recommended high priority changes?" These responses were shared with the staff during the interviews and at the start of the nominal group process. In retrospect, the Director's conduct during the project was perceived as entirely consistent with his stated intentions.

It cannot be doubted that the Director's personal example and the role he played were critical factors in whatever success was achieved in this project. His willingness to devote staff time to interviews and group

process, his genuine and transparent caring about people, his long range committment to staff development, his personal openness to learning and to changing his managerial sytle, his modeling of observable changes in behavior -- all these factors contributed significantly to the positive results obtained.

Turning now to the final phase of the project, the nominal group process (NGP) was perceived as developing in staff members a greater sense of participation in the decision-making processes which affect their lives. They seemed to respond with genuine appreciation. This feeling was an intangible but nonetheless real result of the project.

It has been noted that by means of the NGP consensus was obtained on two (and only two) major objectives. These objectives flowed directly from the three top-ranked staff needs. The other six identified needs were judged of lesser importance, and neither Director nor staff wished to derive additional objectives from these needs. They preferred to concentrate their time and energies on attaining the two major objectives.

This focussing in on target objectives serves as a confirmation of the point made by Easton (1965:140) that the members of a system do not and cannot deal with all demands at once. He notes:

> Of all the demands pressing to get through to the point of decision, only some will make it. The emergence of issues reduces the number to which attention needs to be given, establishes some priorities among the whole range of demands waiting to be acted upon...

In the case of the Career Center staff, only three needs became issues, These were made into objectives and were acted upon. Developing the staff manual for job descriptions, responsibilities, and procedures was not formally made into an objective, but action was taken to meet this need. The other needs, as Easton remarks, "...may be neglected and may fail later to win any further attention...." But nevertheless the Career Center staff's top-ranked needs are currently being attended to, and staff satisfaction with the

results can be predicted with some confidence. In the future, lower-ranked (or other) needs may become issues and require attention and action.

The process of interviewing staff members requires further discussion. The interviews had decidedly positive effects, to judge by non-verbal communication, spoken comments, and the written evaluations (eight out of ten reported being very satisfied). One positive effect indicated by the evaluation was that the interviews allowed staff members to get better acquainted with the facilitator and become more comfortable with him. This was seen as contributing to the development of trust and confidence in him, essential prerequisites to the work to be accomplished both during and after the interviews.

As the interview process progressed, there seemed to be increasingly more comfortable interactions between the facilitator and individual staff members, both during interviews and outside of that time. (The grapevine was undoubtedly at work.) By the time the interviews had been completed, a more relaxed interpersonal climate had developed in the group. This was judged to contribute significantly to the overall effectiveness of the nominal group process which followed the interviews.

During the interviews there was a consistent emphasis on each person's taking responsibility for doing something about staff and personal problems. Although there was no way of verifying results, it was hoped that this emphasis had (and will continue to have) a positive influence on efforts to resolve staff problems. There is no substitute for taking personal responsibility. In addition, the concept was stressed that the individual can make a difference in an organization.

A further positive effect of the interview process came to light towards the conclusion of the project. The trust relationship which developed with the Director and staff members led to and facilitated follow-up

consultations with several individuals. This trust and confidence seemed to grow during the nominal group process. This was judged to be an excellent preparation for the Communication Workshop meetings to follow.

Throughout the project, moreover, the facilitator consistently utilized appropriate communication attitudes (such as unconditional positive regard, empathy, and non-judgmental acceptance of ideas) and effective skills (such as asking open-end questions and empathic listening/paraphrasing). These communication attitudes and skills were consciously employed out of the conviction that modeling is the best form of teaching. In the area of interpersonal relations there is broad agreement on this principle. Cross (1976:211), for example, cites Robert Carkhuff's repeated emphasis on "the importance of the trainer's 'level of interpersonal functioning.'" It was hypothesized that the modeling was at least in part responsible for the attitudinal and behavioral changes observed in participants. Straightforward didactic methods also partially accounted for these changes.

In the final evaluation, six out of ten respondents (three people were absent) reported that the interviews and group meetings had helped them clarify personal objectives, while four were unsure. The same ratio (six to four) held for the question concerned with clarifying staff objectives. Only two people reported themselves unsure of results in both areas: personal and staff objectives.

Thus, a majority of respondents saw the project as helpful in attaining its stated purposes: determining staff needs and objectives. The uncertainty felt by the minority is somewhat puzzling. In the case of personal objectives, this is more understandable inasmuch as they were not the principal focus of the project. Staff needs were very central to the whole process, however, and the two staff objectives derived from

the list of needs stood out very clearly as the focal points of staff concern and future action.

Final written comments on the evaluation form shared a basically positive tenor, with some admixture of scepticism about benefits (past and future). A mood of moderate optimism seemed to prevail.

Inasmuch as this entire project was a preliminary to further staff development work, it can be hoped that it served as an effective preparation for the series of Communication Workshop meetings to follow. The project also identified revision of the evaluation procedure as a major need. That revision has begun and currently successful practices are being incorporated and implemented.

Implications

Because of the reported moderate success of this project, it would seem that this same methodology could be used to good effect with other governance units within the college. If humanizing the institution is a goal, then such staff development could be one means to the desired end.

It is highly unlikely that an entire organization can be changed in one fell swoop, but a unit or teams within that organization is much more susceptible of change. At least the latter is a much more manageable task. The total organization is made up of sub-groups. The whole can be transformed by altering the functioning of those various sub-groups. It is within these human groupings that individual persons work, find their professional identity, and achieve some measure of personal fulfillment.

Since the role of the manager proved to be vital for success, it seems reasonable to assert that any future attempts at staff development by means of this methodology would require strong and positive

leadership on the part of the manager concerned.

A final implication of this project is that the role definition of the counselor can be expanded beyond the traditional one-to-one relationship with students to include such staff development projects as described in this study.

Recommendations

As a result of this staff development project, several recommendations were formulated. It was recommended that:

1. the Director and the Career Center staff consistently make use of "the concept of supportive relationships," which Richardson and Bender (1974:iii) define as the principle "...that praise for constructive actions is more effective in promoting desired behavior than criticisms for mistakes." A slight modification of this principle was suggested. Rather than praise, honest and straightforward recognition seemed a more appropriate response to desired behaviors. If all concerned practiced this concept, a very positive, growth-promoting, and effective organizational atmosphere could develop. Two specific areas of recommended application are (1) relations between supervisor and subordinates; (2) developing an intrastaff system of recognizing and rewarding individuals for effective use of communication attitudes and skills;

2. the Director of the Career Center consistently encourage his staff people to talk with him immediately (or as soon as possible) when problems pertaining to himself arise;

3. each staff member talk directly and as soon as possible to any other individual staff member when problems arise between them;

4. staff personnel consistently encourage one another to talk over problems directly and as soon as possible with the person involved and to ask for consultative help if that seems desirable.

5. on an experimental basis the method of evaluating classified personnel at the Career Center be patterned after currently successful management practices (as presented in this practicum);

6. the Director of the Career Center, in conjunction with the Director of Personnel, utilize current management practices as a model for revising the district's evaluation procedure for classified personnel;

7. serious consideration be given to implementing on an experimental basis the idea advanced by the Director of the Career Center of including a counselor in at least some stage of the evaluation procedure: Check Point A, Check Point B, or the year-end evaluation interview (especially in difficult cases);

8. several follow-up meetings be held with the Director to discuss: (a) feedback relevant to himself, which was obtained from personal interviews, for the purpose of weighing and considering changes in management style (taking special care to conceal the source of information); (b) how to integrate the ideas gained from relevant articles into a practical and effective evaluation procedure; (c) how to handle details of the implementation process, including evaluations conducted by the Placement Officer.

Copies of this practicum were distributed to the Director of the Career Center and to appropriate administrators. One copy was made available to the Career Center staff. Each person on the staff received a copy of the above recommendations.

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West Valley College Career Center

GOAL: ESTABLISH AN EFFECTIVE WORK ATMOSPHERE

Objective: " Identify ways and means for resolving interpersonal conflicts that interfere with job performance."

Plan of Action:

1. Contact a facilitator/resource person to help perfect communication skills. (Recommend Jack Sequist) - Aug. 15

2. Initial meeting with facilitator would be for the purpose of resolving differences, including honoring the chain of command. - Sept. 15

3. Establish a monthly meeting (duration- one hour) for staff where open communication is encouraged. - Sept. 15

   a. examples of areas needing better communication: expression of personal feelings of anger, frustration, job dissatisfaction; how to say "no" without feeling guilty; how to discuss differences of opinion constructively or to criticize constructively.

   b. The purpose of the meetings is to promote teamwork and a philosophy of open, honest, caring and respectful communication.

4. Designate a private place for discussion of problems to avoid distracting co-workers. ( Planning Room is recommended if available or a picnic table outside) -Aug. 1

5. Encourage a monthly luncheon to include all interested career center staff for the purpose of promoting closer relationships. The day will rotate so that part-time workers have a chance to participate. -Sept 30

6. Use a questionnaire to evaluate the monthly meetings in order to ascertain their value and to determine whether they have met the stated objective. The questionnaire is to be filled out by all staff members, with the assistance of the facilitator. - Feb. 1

Appendix B

## Informal Staff Survey (Preliminary)

If I participate in the group meetings:

1) Here's what I'd like to gain for myself:

2) Here's what I'd like to see the group get for itself. Here's what I'd like to see happen for the group.

3) I would like to learn how to:

4) I would like to see all of us learn how to:

Appendix C

## Survey Questionnaire for Personal Interview

During the July retreat, the staff set up a goal of establishing a more effective work atmosphere. The objective was to identify ways and means for resolving interpersonal conflicts that interfere with job performance.

1) What problem (or problems) do you see in this area? How does this problem affect your work, your role on the staff? I'm interested in what symptoms and causes you see. Id also like to know your feelings and attitudes towards this problem.

2) What do you personally need in order to help resolve this problem? How could you help?

3) What does the staff need to help resolve this problem? How could this be done?

4) Any other comments?

Career Center Staff Evaluation

]) Overall, how do you feel about the personal interview with Jack?

_____ very dissatisfied

_____ somewhat dissatisfied

_____ neutral/so-so

_____ reasonably satisfied

_____ very satisfied

2) Overall, how do you feel about the group meetings?

_____ very dissatisfied

_____ somewhat dissatisfied

_____ neutral/so-so

_____ reasonably satisfied

_____ very satisfied

3) Have the interview and the group meetings resulted in your knowing Jack better and feeling more comfortable with him as a person?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure _____

4) Have the interview and the group meetings helped you to clarify your personal objectives related to your work in the Career Center?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure _____

5) In your opinion, has the process of interviews and group meetings resulted in clarifying staff objectives related to improving the work atmosphere?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure _____

6) Any other comments?

# FINAL RANKING OF CAREER CENTER NEEDS

1. Communication Attitudes

   Respect opinions
   Consider and accept each person's privacy and viewpoint
   Forgiveness
   Mutual trust
   Sense of humor
   Honesty
   Eliminate hypocrisy
   Objectivity
   Agree not to gossip
   Treat all staff in a fair, warm, and professional manner
   Eliminate favoritism
   Take responsibility
   Promote personal growth, self-worth

2. Communication Skills

   Empathic listening
   Presenting information
   I messages
   Assertiveness
   Expressing negative feelings
   Accepting/implementing communication as a two-way process
   Using sense of humor
   Accepting negative feedback
   Agree it's OK to give negative feedback to supervisors
   Clarity and specificity of instructions
   Uniform dissemination of instructions
   Resolving problems immediately or as soon as possible

3. Management Functions/Procedures

   Promote personal growth and self-worth
   Develop a system for on-going evaluation
      coaching/recognizing achievement
      clarifying expectations
      constructive criticism
      self-awareness
   Clarifying/prioritizing job responsibilities

4. Leadership: direction/decisions
   Follow through to completion/getting results
   Organization, productivity

5. Integration/less segregation of services
   Cooperative projects/flexibility in use of job descriptions

6. Establish/refine procedures to distribute labor more effectively
   Establish procedures for routine duties (manual)

7. Department staff: weekly problem solving sessions

8. Less authoritative environment/attitude

9. Criticism workshop